

DECEMBER EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

AUTAUGA CAMPUS MR. WILLIAM MERK



VACCA CAMPUS MS. SHERRY ISHMAN



MT. MEIGS CAMPUS OFFICER PATRICK THOMASON



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES

January 2022 Newsletter

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



A new year always brings hope and the promise of change. It is a time for most people to take stock of some aspect of their life and commit to changing their thinking or behavior in order to achieve something better for themselves. I hope whatever that is for each of you, that you will be successful and that it will bring you and those around you a sense of happiness and accomplishment.

The same is true for each of us professionally and as a collective organization. The new year is a time to resolve to do what we can to enhance our efforts. In some cases, it may be to just hang on a little longer until things move closer to normal! We have been working under this "new" normal for nearly two years now and we have responded well as an organization. The latest variant is causing us to rise up once again, weather the surge, and together get through another challenging few weeks.

One way the organization will seek to enhance our efforts is to engage in strategic planning. I wanted to do this in 2020, but Covid-19 put it on the back burner. As a department, it is time to review and update our Mission, Vision, and Values and identify goals that will provide a clear direction for the next 3 years. Your input is important and there will be opportunities to provide your thoughts and ideas as we begin the process.

I would like to officially welcome Ms. Alesia Allen to her new position as Deputy Director for Institutional Service. She and Ms. Lewis have worked closely through the transition and I am confident she will continue to provide the leadership for Institutional Services seeks to enhance our programs, improve conditions of confinement, and contribute to staff well-being.

The State Personnel Board approved a new incentive plan for DYS direct care employees that replaces the previous incentive plan. Watch for information about this new plan from HR and ask your supervisor about how it works. The new incentive plan emphasizes staff recognizing their co-workers for positive work habits and doing the extra things that improve the workplace and help get it done! Look for more information in the coming weeks.

Finally, I would like to wish Ms. Janice Lewis, Mr. David Rogers, and all the DYS staff who retired last month all the best and thank you for your efforts to make this department better than when you arrived.

Happy New Year

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Steven P. Lafreniere".

Steven Lafreniere

DYS Highlights

DYS Campuses Celebrate the Holiday Season!

The DYS campuses celebrated Christmas with much joy and comradery. Each campus had unique celebrations where students and staff gathered together to participate in festive activities. Each campus provided a wide variety of food and treats for the students and staff.



DYS Adopts Family Through the Christmas Clearinghouse Project

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our 2021 Christmas Clearinghouse Project/Adopted Family. Central Office staff donated toys, clothes, and gift cards that we combined with your \$815 in monetary donations to make the Christmas wishes of little Xochitl, Obalys and Roy come true. We are truly grateful for each of you opening your hearts to share with this family. Ms. Davis spoke with the family's caseworker and she was excited and overjoyed. Thank you again for your generosity!

Santa's Helpers:

Carol Davis
Latosha Mallory
Yolanda Byrdsong
Melody Nelson

Kenny Peoples
Shannon Weston
Chris Narcisse



DYS Highlights

DYS Administrative Division Hosts Retirement Celebration for Staff

On Tuesday, December 14th, the DYS Administrative Division hosted a retirement celebration for the staff leaving at the end of the year. The honorees included David Rogers, Wendell Ross, Karen Gaston, Jim Bates, Kendall Miller, Phyllis Carney from Legal, and Janice Lewis from Institutional Services. DYS Administrative Division staff provided a luncheon for the honorees and celebrated their years of service.



DYS Executive Staff Honor Deputy Director Janice Coles-Lewis and Deputy Director David Rogers

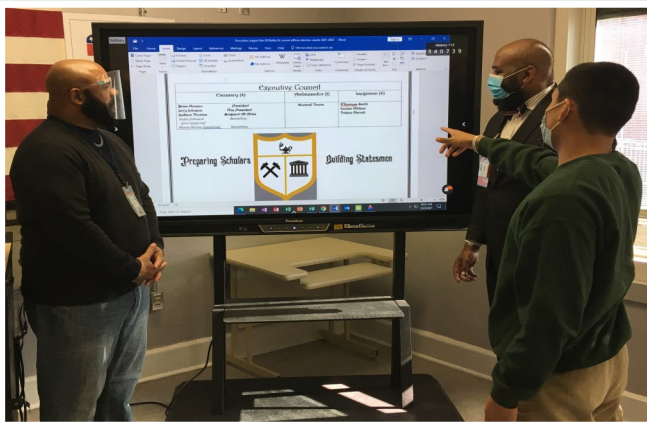
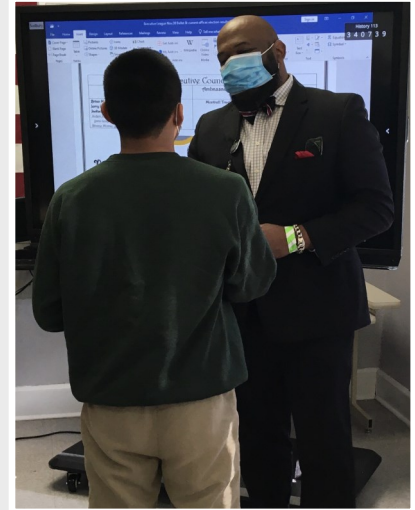
On Wednesday, December 15th, the DYS Executive Staff paid tribute to Ms. Lewis and Mr. Rogers for their many years of service and dedication to the AL Dept. of Youth Services. During the luncheon, both Ms. Lewis and Mr. Rogers were presented with tokens of appreciation and honored for all of their hard work. Dr. Muller, Ms. Lois Jenkins, our former PbS Coach, and her husband were also in attendance.



DYS Highlights

The Vacca Youth Executive League Receives a Visit From Mr. Terry Roller, Assistant State Superintendent of the Alabama Dept. of Education

On December 3, 2021 the Vacca Youth Executive League held a meeting for the installation of new officers and members. YEL Coordinators Franklin Reaves and Shannon Sudbury discussed the role of the members as gentlemen and scholars. The members had an opportunity to hear from a special guest, Assistant State Superintendent of the Alabama State Department of Education, Mr. Terry Roller. Mr. Roller shared a message about knowing your purpose, mission, and how to be great. He stated, "You can come from nothing, become something, and do anything." Mr. Roller expressed how impressed he was with the YEL members knowledge of the Robert's Rules of Order. The members and coordinators were truly appreciative of his inspiring words.



Vacca Youth Executive League Participates in the First Annual Christmas Fry Day Party

On Friday, December 10th, the Vacca Youth Executive League (YEL) held their first annual Christmas Fry Day Party. The students held a YEL meeting, received certificates, and shared a meal of fried fish, fried shrimp, chicken tenders, macaroni & cheese, potato wedges, fruit tray, and cookies. The students listened to music and played various games such as chess, jumbo checkers, scrabble, monopoly, rainbow jumbling tower, and the games in the S.U.B. game room. The event was a success and the students were truly appreciative.

DYS Highlights

DYS Will Offer New Employee Engagement Incentive Bonus in 2022

Beginning in 2022, DYS will offer a quarterly retention incentive bonus to direct care staff in classifications of Youth Services Aide, Youth Services Senior Aide, Youth Services Team Coordinator, Youth Services Team Leader, Security Guard I, Security Guard II, and Youth Services Security Officer. This bonus is offered to these classifications to improve agency culture, employee engagement, and employee retention within the direct care classifications. DYS will offer a bonus to twenty-five direct care staff per quarter. This bonus would allow staff and individuals working on DYS campuses to nominate staff members in specific classifications as recipients of the bonus. Staff nominated must have performed an act or actions that positively impact youth in DYS custody or significantly impact departmental operations or another act such as going above and beyond by being a team player or volunteering. Additional information regarding the amount of the bonus and eligibility criteria will be sent out by the DYS Personnel Office.

DYS Employee Recruitment Efforts for Spring 2022

IN 2022, DYS will continue to reach out to the community to recruit new employees to the agency. One of the goal's of the agency is to recruit and retain qualified staff who want to work with youth in our custody. This spring, DYS plans to participate in as many community and college career fairs as possible in order to expand our recruitment efforts and provide information about our agency to potential employees. DYS has registered to participate in several college career fairs. Some of these fairs are listed below.

University of Alabama Health & Human Services Career Fair - Monday, January 31st

UAB Spring Career Fair - Tuesday, February 15th

Troy University Health & Human Services Career Fair - Tuesday, April 12th

Mt. Meigs and Vacca Campus PbS/QA Teams - Mark Your Calendars!



It is that time again! The Vacca and Mt. Meigs Campuses will be participating in their bi-annual PbS Performance Profile calls. The campus QA teams will review the October outcomes with our PbS Coach, Ms. Joyce Burrell. The teams will need to review outcomes and discuss potential new goals prior to the call. After the calls, we will meet to finalize the Facility Improvement Plans (FIPs) and submit to PbS. We will also send out the final plans that will include goals and strategies to all staff at the Vacca and Mt. Meigs Campuses.

Vacca Performance Profile Call - Tuesday, January 4th - 1:30 - 3:00 pm

Mt. Meigs Performance Profile Call - Wednesday, January 5th - 1:00 - 2:30 pm